General Assembly

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Agenda item 118

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[*on the report of the Fifth Committee (A/63/648/Add.2)*]

63/261. Strengthening of the Department of Political Affairs

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 62/236 of 22 December 2007,

Having considered the report of the Secretary-General on the revised estimates under section 1, Overall policymaking, direction and coordination, section 3, Political affairs, section 28D, Office of Central Support Services, and section 35, Staff assessment, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2008–2009, relating to the strengthening of the Department of Political Affairs,[1] the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the audit of the management of special political missions by the Department of Political Affairs,[2] the letter dated 7 March 2008 from the Permanent Representatives of Antigua and Barbuda and Cuba to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General,[3] the letter dated 12 March 2008 from the Secretary-General to the Permanent Representatives of Antigua and Barbuda and Cuba to the United Nations[4] and the related report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions,[5]

Reaffirming its rules of procedure,

Recalling the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation[6] and the Financial Regulations and Rules of the United Nations,[7]

Stressing the intergovernmental, multilateral and international character of the United Nations,

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[1] A/62/521 and Corr.1.

[2] A/61/357.

[3] A/C.5/62/24.

[4] A/C.5/62/25.

[5] A/62/7/Add.32. For the final text, see *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-second Session, Supplement No. 7A*.

[6] ST/SGB/2000/8.

[7] ST/SGB/2003/7.

Reaffirming the role of the General Assembly and its relevant intergovernmental and expert bodies, within their respective mandates, in planning, programming, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation,

Recognizing that the prevention of armed conflict and the peaceful settlement of disputes are central to the mandate of the United Nations,

Recognizing also that preventive diplomacy is a core function of the United Nations and is central to the role of the Secretary-General and that the Department of Political Affairs has primary responsibility for carrying out preventive diplomacy and supporting the good offices function of the Secretary-General,

Recognizing further the important role of the good offices of the Secretary-General, including in the mediation of disputes,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General;[1]

2. *Stresses* that any activity by the Department of Political Affairs related to preventive diplomacy and conflict resolution must be carried out in accordance with the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of States;

3. *Also stresses* that improvement in the capacity of the United Nations to prevent and resolve conflicts is a better investment than dealing with the cost of armed conflict and its aftermath;

4. *Recognizes* the important role women play in the area of preventive diplomacy;

5. *Also recognizes* that the root causes of armed conflict are multidimensional in nature, thus requiring a comprehensive and integrated approach to the prevention of armed conflict;

6. *Notes* that the objective of strengthening and rationalizing the Department of Political Affairs, including its supportive role regarding preventive diplomacy and resolution of conflict, is to improve the Department's effectiveness and efficiency in fulfilling its mandate;

7. *Reaffirms* that the Fifth Committee is the appropriate Main Committee of the General Assembly entrusted with responsibilities for administrative and budgetary matters;

8. *Also reaffirms* its role in carrying out a thorough analysis and approval of human and financial resources and policies, with a view to ensuring full, effective and efficient implementation of all mandated programmes and activities and the implementation of policies in this regard;

9. *Further reaffirms* its role with regard to the structure of the Secretariat, and stresses that proposals to amend the overall departmental structure, as well as the format of the programme budget and the biennial programme plan, are subject to its review and prior approval;

10. *Reaffirms* its resolution 55/231 of 23 December 2000, and requests the Secretary-General to ensure that in presenting the programme budget, expected accomplishments and indicators of achievement are included to measure achievements in the implementation of the programmes of the Organization and not those of individual Member States;

11. *Requests* the Secretary-General to explore potential synergies and complementarities among special political missions, where possible, in order to avoid duplication and overlap, bearing in mind the autonomous nature of each legislative mandate;

12. *Underlines* the continued importance of the role of the Secretary-General in ensuring, when appointing his special representatives and envoys, the highest standards of integrity, competency, impartiality and professionalism;

13. *Emphasizes* the sensitivity of the mandates of special political missions, and in this regard recalls Article 2, paragraph 7, of the Charter of the United Nations;

14. *Recalls* that the Secretary-General may nominate special representatives and envoys, and in this respect notes the intention of the Secretary-General to continuously consult with Member States concerned on these matters;

15. *Also recalls* the role of the Secretary-General as the Chief Administrative Officer of the Organization, in accordance with the provisions of Article 97 of the Charter;

16. *Reiterates* that the delegation of authority on the part of the Secretary-General should be in order to facilitate the better management of the Organization, but stresses that the overall responsibility for management of the Organization rests with the Secretary-General as the Chief Administrative Officer;

17. *Also reiterates* the importance of strengthened accountability in the Organization and of ensuring greater accountability of the Secretary-General to Member States, inter alia, for the effective and efficient implementation of legislative mandates and the use of human and financial resources;

18. *Recalls* the letter dated 7 March 2008 from the Permanent Representatives of Antigua and Barbuda and Cuba to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General[7] and the letter dated 12 March 2008 from the Secretary-General to the Permanent Representatives of Antigua and Barbuda and Cuba to the United Nations,[8] stresses the strong concerns of some Member States contained therein,[7] and requests the Secretary-General to ensure that there is sufficient knowledge within the Department of Political Affairs of the political situation in all regions and to abide strictly by the principles enshrined in the Charter;

19. *Requests* the Secretary-General, in this regard, to ensure that, in the submission of future budget documents, the narrative parts are based solely on factual information;

20. *Stresses* the importance of the role of the Department of Political Affairs in providing appropriate political guidance in the context of its involvement in United Nations trust funds to which it provides such guidance, in accordance with the principles enshrined in the Charter and the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly;

21. *Endorses* the conclusions and recommendations contained in the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions,[9] subject to the provisions of the present resolution;

22. *Recalls* section V, paragraph 8, of its resolution 62/238 of 22 December 2007, takes note of the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services[3] and stresses the importance of its full implementation;

23. *Emphasizes* the importance of the integration of effort, policy coherence and efficiency in the use of resources;

24. *Reiterates its request* to the Secretary-General to address systemic issues that hamper good management of the Organization, including the work processes and procedures, and in that context stresses that structural change is no substitute for managerial improvement;

25. *Requests* the Secretary-General to identify, where possible, means to achieve greater complementarities and synergies between the Department of Political Affairs and other departments and offices of the United Nations Secretariat as well as other relevant actors of the United Nations system;

26. *Stresses* the importance of clear reporting lines and accountability between the special political missions and Headquarters;

27. *Decides* to establish the Middle East and West Asia Division and, in this regard, not to divide it into sections and units, and stresses the need to continue the current arrangement;

28. *Recalls* all United Nations resolutions related to the situation in the Middle East and the question of Palestine, and notes the responsibilities of the Middle East and West Asia Division in this regard;

29. *Decides* that the Asia and Pacific Division shall be composed of two sections, as follows:

(*a*) Asia-Pacific I Section (Central, South and North-east Asian countries);

(*b*) Asia-Pacific II Section (South-east Asia and the Pacific countries);

30. *Also decides* that the Americas Division shall comprise four sections, as follows:

(*a*) North America;

(*b*) Central America;

(*c*) The Caribbean;

(*d*) South America;

31. *Stresses* the importance of the Department of Political Affairs continuing to pay adequate attention to the situation in Haiti in support of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, together with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean and other relevant United Nations entities;

32. *Decides* that the Caribbean Section shall be headed at the P-5 level;

33. *Stresses* the importance of the Department of Political Affairs continuing to pay adequate attention to regional and subregional organizations;

34. *Decides* not to establish a Policy, Partnerships and Mediation Support Division and not to approve the reclassification of a post for a director of that division from the D-1 to the D-2 level, and requests the Secretary-General to resubmit his proposals, taking fully into account the mandate of the Department of Political Affairs as stipulated in the strategic framework;

35. *Also decides* not to establish a Special Political Missions Support Unit until a report on the management and administration of special political missions by the Department of Political Affairs is considered by the General Assembly;

36. *Stresses* the need for the Secretary-General to consider the status of the existing field presence of the United Nations entities engaged in promoting peace and security, taking into account their respective mandates, before proposing the establishment of regional offices;

37. *Recalls* paragraph 23 of the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions,[5] and stresses that the establishment of any future regional political affairs office requires the concurrence of all concerned Member States covered by the relevant mandate approved by the appropriate legislative bodies;

38. *Encourages* the Secretary-General to continue to regularly brief Member States on issues related to the work of the Department of Political Affairs and to keep ensuring appropriate interaction between the Department and the principal bodies of the Organization;

39. *Requests* the Secretary-General to entrust the Office of Internal Oversight Services with conducting an audit of the management of special political missions by the Department of Political Affairs, as a follow-up to the report of the Office, and to submit a report on the audit to the General Assembly for consideration at the main part of its sixty-fourth session;

40. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to submit a comprehensive report to the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session on the efficiency and effectiveness of the new structure in the implementation of mandates as well as programmatic delivery and improvements in the administrative and management processes and efficiency gains;

41. *Decides* to establish the posts as contained in the annex to the present resolution.

74th plenary meeting
24 December 2008

Annex

Department of Political Affairs: posts to be established under the programme budget for the biennium 2008–2009

Organizational unit		*Number of posts*	*Post level*
United Nations Liaison Office	New	3	1 P-5, 1 P-3, 1 LL
	Reclassification		1 D-1 to D-2
Office of the Under-Secretary-General	Reclassification		1 P-3 to P-4
	Redeployment		D-2 from Americas Division
Office of the Assistant Secretary-General (Africa)	New	1	1 P-4
Africa I Division	New	8	3 P-4, 2 P-3, 1 P-2, 2 GS (OL)
Africa II Division	New	6	1 P-3, 4 P-2, 1 GS (OL)
Middle East and West Asia Division	New	5	1 P-5, 1 P-4 (Iraq), 2 P-3, 1 P-2
Asia and Pacific Division	New	4	3 P-3, 1 P-2
Americas Division	New	3	1 P-5, 2 P-2
	Redeployment		D-2 to the Office of the Under-Secretary-General
Europe Division	New	1	1 P-4 (Cyprus)
	Reclassification		1 D-1 to D-2
Mediation Support Unit	New	7	1 P-4, 3 P-3, 2 P-2, 1 GS (OL)
Electoral Assistance Division	New	8	1 P-5, 3 P-4, 4 GS (OL)
	Reclassification		1 P-2 to P-3
Security Council Affairs Division	New	2	2 P-2
Executive Office	New	1	1 P-4
	Reclassification		1 P-5 to D-1
	Total	**49**	**2 D-2, -1 D-1, 3 P-5, 12 P-4, 12 P-3, 12 P-2, 8 GS (OL), 1 LL**

Abbreviations: GS (OL), General Service (Other Level); LL, Local level.